

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 445.

My name is Clayton Hershner and I am from Morrow County, here in Ohio. I have been a part of the LifeWise organization for the past year, and I have personally seen great benefits in the lives of the 80+ children that have attended our classes.

I am convinced that allowing families to release their children to LifeWise during school hours has been a great asset to our community! It has been amazing to see how many children are coming and receiving a life-changing Gospel message that will impact children & families for generations to come!

The words of Jesus are, and have always been, the foundation of truth that shape and transform lives in order to love others! Children are learning who they truly are! Their identity is not based on the mistakes or misfortunes of family circles. In fact, our real identity is in the fact that we are created in the image of God, our Father. And when children understand that *“what they’ve been through”* does not determine their outcome, there is a real freedom that comes with this! Because it is not what they have been through that changes them, but rather what Jesus went through is what changes us. Children learn that they have REAL VALUE because of what was paid for them on the cross, through the blood of Jesus! And when they experience and understand THAT kind of LOVE, they then learn to love others out of this love that has been expressed to them.

I am convinced that this will not only change the way our communities see one another, but in time, it will help our country see that LOVE can overcome ANY darkness or opposition that we face in life. And the phrase “UNITED WE STAND” can and WILL remain true! What a gift it is to live in this country! Our country is worth fighting for, and it’s worth educating future generations to continue to live out the fact that we still are... “ONE NATION UNDER GOD.”

“Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to advocate for House Bill 445.

Sincerely,

Clayton Hershner